

Message Text

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43

ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 IO-11 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SAM-01 /087 W

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P R 121605Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4932

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY BAMAKO

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

USMISSION NATO

USMISSION USUN NY

USCINCEUR

CINCEINAVEUR

FOSIF ROTA

KAFRMAA/COMSIXTHFLT

C O N F I D E N T I A L NOUAKCHOTT 0053

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR PBOR MMOL MO S MR MO SS SP

SUBJECT: SAHARA WATCH: MAURITANIAN MILITARY ADVANCES

REF: NOUAKCHOTT 0052

1. MILITARY ACTIVITY IN NORTHERN MAURITANIA AND SOUTHERN
SAHARA INCREASED SUBSTANTIALLY OVER WEEKEND. JANUARY 12
CHAAB, GHBERNMENT-RUN DAILY, QUOTING "CIRVLFS CLOSE TO
NATIONAL MILITARY HEADQUARTERS" REPORTS MAURITANIAN FORCES
"LIBERATED" CITY OF AARGUB (2336N, 1550W) AND REGION AROUND
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BIR GANDUZ (2137N, 1628W) ON JANUARY 10 AND 11 "ON THEIR

WAY TOWARD DAKHLA (VILLA CISNEROS)". ACCORDING TO SPANISH EMBASSY OFFICER, WHO CONFIRMS MAURITANIANS ARE CURRENTLY OCCUPYING ABOVE TOWNS, AARGUB FELL TO GIRM ATTACK FORCE AFTER TWO-HOUR FIRE FIGHT WITH POLISARIO ELEMENTS. FIGHTING WAS SAID TO HAVE BROKEN OFF WHEN POLISARIO FORCES FLED SOUTHEAST IN THE DIRECTION OF AUSERT (2235N, 1415W), AND GIRM MILITARY NVVED INTO CITY WITH LITTLE IF ANY ADDITIONAL RESISTANCE.

2. SPANISH EMBASSY REPORTS (A) BETWEEN 400 AND ;/0 MOROCCAN TROOPS REACHED DAKHLA BY ROAD ON JANUARY 10 AND 11 AND (B) ON JANUARY 11 ONE COMPANY (ABOUT 125 SOLIDERS) OF MAURITANIAN MILITARY ARRIVED IN DAKHLA, PRESUMABLY BY AIR. ALTHOUGH EXTENT TO WHICH MOROCCGDF AND MAURITANIAN MILITARY ELEMENTS COORDINATEDD THEIR ARRIVAL AND SUBSEQUENT DEPLOYMENT IN DAKHLA REMAINS UN-CLEAR, MOROCCANS ARE SAID TO BE TAKING OVER ADMINISTRA-TIVE APPARATUS BEING LEFT BEHIND BY SPANISH WITHOUT MAURITANIAN ASSISTANCE. AS SPANISH MILITARY PREPARES TO EVACUATE ITS LAST REMUNING FORCES FROM VILLA CIS-NEROS JANUARY 12, SPANISH EMBASSY REPORTS SPORADIC FIGHTING IN THAT CITY BETWEEN POCKETS OF POLISARIO RE-SISTANCE UNITS AND MOROCCAN REGULARS. TO DATE, CASUAL-TIES ON BOTH SIDES HAVE REPORTEDLY BEEN LIGHT.

3. THERE CONTIMZE TO BE REPORTS OF ISOLATED BATOVES BETWEEN POLISARIO AND GIRM FORCES INSIDE MAURITANIAN TERRITORY. LATEST SKIRMISH IS OCCURRING AT NORTHERN MAURITANIAN VILLAGE OF BIR BEL GUERDAN (2524N, 1031W). SPANISH EMBASSY REPORTS FIGHTING BROKE OUT ABOUT NOON JANUARY 11 WHEN A SMALL MAURITANIAN PATROL WITH AT LEAST ONE MOROCCAN OFFICER RAN INTO SNIPER FIRE FROM A UNIT OF ROUGHLY 70 POLISARIO. FIGHTING CONTINUES AS OF NOON JANUARY 12 LOCAL TIME, AND CASUALTIES THUS FAR INCLUDE FOUR MAURITANIAN, INCLUDING ONE LIEUTENANT, DEAD, AND SEVEN WOUNDED. ALL MAURITANIAN CASUALTIES HAVE BEEN EVACUATED TO HOSPITAL IN NOUAKCHOTT. MAURITANIANS CLAIM 23 POLISARIO SOLDIERS HAVE BEEN RCILLED, BUT IT IS POSSIBLE MAURITANIANS AT THIS POINT ARE COMPILING BODY COUNTS WITHOUT REGARD TO DISTINCTION

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BETWEEN ARMED INSURGENTS AND UNARMED CIVILIANS.RANDYSIDE

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